

The Lions Roar



INDEPENDENCE

March 2007

WSSB Student Attempts to Change State Law

By Vaughn Brown, WSSB Student

Animal verses Human Massage

There is a time when it is best to leave matters alone. There is a time it is best to speak up. My name is Vaughn Brown and I am a Senior at the Washington State School for the Blind. I am also a certified Equine therapeutic and sports massage therapist. This means I have formal training to perform massage on horses, donkeys, mules and zebras. I achieved this certification last July at Bridgecreek Equine Massage School in Oregon. When I returned to Washington I found that I could not practice my massage business. A Washington State law prevented me from doing this by stating that an animal massage therapist must be trained in human massage first. This took me by surprise.

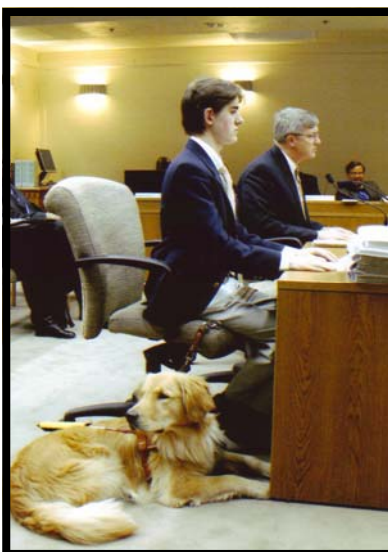
Months went by and the massages I offered were free due to the law. I then took it upon myself to address this issue. Thankfully WSSB's Superintendent, Dr. Stenehjem, knew who to send me to. Senator Brandland and I met briefly at WSSB while he was in town touring our campus. I asked Senator Brandland if he could help me and he said yes. Soon after I wrote him a letter.

The next thing I knew Dr. Stenehjem called to tell me that Senator Brandland wanted me to testify at a hearing regarding Senate Bill 5403 regarding this subject, on January 25th. I was stunned!

Our Principal, Craig Meador, and fellow students Chelsea Armstrong and Stephanie Bair took the ride up to Olympia with me. I brought along copies of the testimony, in both print and Braille, my five-volume long horse anatomy book, and a copy of my certificate and massage notes. I wanted to leave the impression that indeed I was educated in the field of animal massage.

We arrived in Olympia. After taking a shuttle to the proper building we met with Senator Brandland. He once again struck me as a kind, warm gentlemen and I felt at ease right away.

"Vaughn," he said confidently. "You will do wonderful. All you need to do is smile, be natural and tell them your case."



Vaughn Brown, Guide Dog Sprocket, and Senator Brandland at the hearing
Washington State Senate Photography

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WSSB Student Attempts to Change State Law (continued)

By Vaughn Brown, WSSB Student

I was nervous as we entered the meeting room. A reporter from the *Columbian* sat down by me and started asking questions and taking notes. My Guide Dog Sprocket received a lot of good remarks for his behavior and appearance. Next, Senator Rasmussen came up to me and introduced herself. Her presence was warm and caring. She reminded me that all I had to do was smile, go with the flow and spell out my argument.

Once I reached the table to testify I felt freed of my jumping nerves and I calmly and firmly testified. Once I was done, other professionals from animal, vet and human massage boards stepped forward and agreed with the proposed bill.

Outside as we waited for the shuttle I had a chance to talk with Senator Brandland's Assistant, Bunny. She is a delightful woman. We traded animal stories. Senator Brandland then told the trio where to have a good dinner. Mr. Meador, Chelsea, Stephanie and I had outstanding pizzas!

However, the story does not end here. For the last two months the Senators, Lobbyists and I have been debating and addressing issues regarding Senate Bill 5403. During the process I learned a great deal about politics. The most important lessons I learned were how good relationships with officials can help, how to be patient, when to stay quiet, and overall how not to take personal matters too personally. Despite any frustrations that I may have felt during the process it has been a very positive experience.

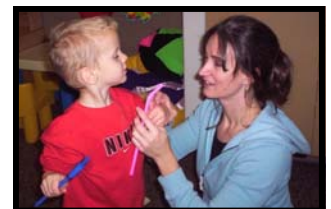
Thank you Dr. Stenehjerm for finding the right Senator for me. Thank you to Dr. Stenehjerm's assistant, Janet for keeping me posted. Thank you Chelsea, Stephanie and Mr. Meador for coming with me to Olympia. Thank you to my Mom for editing and revising my letter, testimony and helping me to stay positive. I also would like to thank the staff and members of the Braille Access Center for helping me become successful by producing my text book and handouts into Braille for the course. To those who wrote letters or supported me in their respectable ways, I am grateful for it!

To be silent is to be unheard.

WSSB Teacher Receives Service Award

On Saturday, November 18, 2006, WSSB Teacher, Carol Schultz was the recipient of a Service Award from the ARC of Clark County. The 2006 year recipients were selected from nominees across Clark County who made significant gains in their personal life or work to make a difference in the lives of those with disabilities. This particular award is in recognition of Carol's commitment to the education of children with developmental delays and disabilities.

Carol was joined at the ceremony by Pat Wilber (WSSB Teacher), Karen Mowry (Assistant Principal), and Craig Meador (Director of On-Campus Programs). The event was held at the Hilton in downtown Vancouver.



WSSB Teacher, Carol Schultz
with Preschooler,
Logan Farland

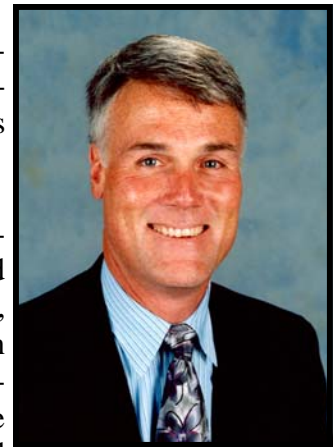
WSSB Welcomes John Driscoll, Board of Trustees, Congressional District 5

John Driscoll joined the Washington State School for the Blind Board of Trustees in December, 2006. John represents the 5th Congressional District.

John has been active as a volunteer in Spokane, serving on Boards and groups dedicated to underserved people. Currently, as Executive Director of Project Access, John oversees a program that is providing donated medical care to low-income, uninsured people. He finds it most rewarding to be able to help patients get the health care services they need.

John started his career as a mental health provider. From that experience, he decided the best way he could help others would be to use his leadership and business skills to improve how communities, and non-profits, serve their constituents the best way possible.

John has been a long time member of the Medical Group Management Association, and is involved in his community, serving as President of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Spokane in 2003, and as a member of Spokane Rotary Club 21, serving as Chairman of the Disabilities Committee. He has been an instructor in Health Law for the Washington State University Masters in Health Policy and Administration program, and has conducted seminars in contracting and compliance programs to organizations including medical societies, residency programs, and practice management organizations.



Board Member, John Driscoll

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Denise Colley, 2305 Maxine Street SE, Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 438-0072

WSSB Ex-Officio Members

Teachers: Judy Koch-Smith, 2214 East 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98661 (360) 696-6321

Washington Council of the Blind: Berl Colley, 2305 Maxine Street SE, Lacey, WA 98503 (360) 438-0072

WFSE Local #1225: Bonda Albers, 2214 East 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98661 (360) 696-6321

National Federation of the Blind of WA: Mike Freeman, 101 NE 83rd St, #A, Vancouver, WA 98665, (360) 576-5965

Parent Representative: Jean Curtis, 4317 NE 66th Ave., C27, Vancouver, WA 98661, (360) 433-2643

WSSB – Board of Trustees takes a stand on WASL

At the Washington State School for the Blind's Board of Trustees meeting on December 1-2, 2006 in Olympia, the Board's Legislative and Education Committee made a motion to write a Position Paper to list concerns with the visual bias as it pertains to the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). This Position Paper was shared with OSPI and Representatives and Senators.

POSITION PAPER

Concerns with lack of accessibility due to Visual Bias with the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)

To ensure that the WASL is fully accessible without visual bias, the Washington State School for the Blind Board of Trustees urges the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to implement the following:

- ◇ Work in partnership with the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) and other organizations with knowledge in accessible assessment of blind and visually impaired students in the development of the WASL assessment instruments free of visual bias.
- ◇ Incorporate the concepts of universal design into the WASL assessment instruments, therefore eliminating bias and/or providing substitute questions in those cases where visual bias can not be eliminated within the WASL instruments.
- ◇ Not withhold an academic diploma for any blind and visually impaired student until appropriate assessments can be developed and utilized. Until this time, those working with the blind shall be allowed to use other instruments that have become viewed as appropriate for assessing blind and visually impaired students.
- ◇ Eliminate the requirement for a blind and visually impaired student to have to fail the current instrument twice before using a modified instrument, until such time as visual bias has been eliminated.
- ◇ Follow standard protocols when assessing blind and visually impaired students as recommended by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH):
 - Include information on effective testing with low vision students, material modification, lighting conditions, etc.
 - Provide teachers of the blind and visually impaired guidelines as to what needs to be included in the student's IEP in order to facilitate the use of additional adaptive equipment and techniques during testing. (WSSB can help facilitate this)
- ◇ Utilize accessibility standards for print font, contrast, and test booklet size that can be used by low vision students as recommended by the American Printing House for the Blind (tests and measurement division).

**WSSB – Board of Trustees takes a stand on WASL (*continued*)**

- ◇ Have designated teachers of the blind and visually impaired review test questions to determine appropriateness for low vision and blind students, as part of the test question review process.
- ◇ Provide adequate time for teachers of the blind and visually impaired (TBVI) and transcriber to approve questions and tactile graphics to conform with appropriate format.
- ◇ Provide adequate time for materials to be transcribed into braille.
- ◇ Provide WSSB the ability to count all visually Impaired and blind students throughout the state for reimbursement purposes to be able to offer summer training for students either on the campus in Vancouver or through on-line learning options to assist with special techniques necessary for the blind and visually impaired child to have the opportunity to pass the WASL.

The WSSB Board of Trustees has an obligation to advocate for blind and visually impaired children throughout Washington and offers to work in partnership with OSPI in providing the valid assessments to appropriately measure blind and visually impaired students. However, OSPI has to be willing to consider that for low incidence populations such as the blind and visually impaired, one approach or one instrument will not meet all student's needs. Likewise, the training that is provided by districts to increase student test results, when targeted at the general student population may have little or no positive impact on blind and visually impaired students due to the special considerations and training required by these students. Therefore, as a Board we offer our time and the time and talents of staff at WSSB to help solve this statewide issue. We look forward to a response to this Statement of Concern with a plan for resolution and/or a commitment to work together in establishing timelines with strategies for resolution.

Submitted by the Washington School for the Blind Board of Trustees on January 6, 2007.

WSSB 2007 Track Meet—May 17, 2007

It's that time of year again! WSSB's annual track meet where students from both near and far gather to compete for the coveted awards given only once a year! Be part of the fun, mingle with old and new friends and enjoy the sunshine that we're going to have this year (OK, well maybe rain, but it will still be fun).

Registration: 8:30 am–9:00 am
Track & Field Events: 9:15 am–3:15 pm
Location: Washington State School for the Blind
2214 E. 13th St.
Vancouver, WA 98661

All participants must pre-register for this event by submitting registration forms (postmarked by April 27). Forms can be located on WSSB's website at www.wssb.wa.gov. For more information contact Jennifer Butcher at (360) 696-6321, extension 151, or jennifer.butcher@wssb.wa.gov.

IRC/BAC News

By Colleen Lines, Manager Instructional Resource Center/Braille Access Center *BAC is an unfunded program supported by a fee-for-service basis*

Transcribers Receive Commendations for Skills Learned Behind Bars

December 13th, 2006 was a day to remember at the Washington Corrections Center for Women (WCCW), where two women were honored at a luncheon reception. The event was covered by KOMO 4 News, KING 5 News and The News Tribune newspaper!

Shannon Cornelius and Robin (last name withheld) have meticulously studied Braille and have achieved the elite honor of earning the National Library of Congress Transcriber of Mathematics Braille Certificate. According to our records they are among only five active certified mathematics transcribers in Washington to achieve this level.

Shannon, from Yakima has been at WCCW since 1999 and entered the Braille Program in October 2000. She says "I'm doing what I found I like to do, which is to help others." It took two years of studying and Nemeth lessons to achieve her goal.

"This is one job I absolutely love," Robin said. "I would rather be doing this than any job I had before. It is ironic I had to come here to learn it. Before I was ever arrested, I read about the program and thought what a great idea it was to do this kind of work in prison." What a strange coincidence! When she landed at WCCW she set her sights on being accepted into the Braille Transcription program, applied twice and finally landed a spot in May 2001.

Retired teacher of the blind, Kay Adamson, says the work coming out of the prison is the best. "They make a huge difference, and it's not just the quality of braille. We order braille from all over the U.S. and by far, this is the best braille that we get."

WSSB coordinates this program and supports it through a fee for services. There is no cost to the taxpayer.

Upon release from prison these women will have a skill that is highly desirable and will be employable, contributing members of society. It's a winning program for all involved, from the transcriber to the student receiving the braille textbooks!

Assistive Technology Summit offered at WSSB

Come join Bruce McClanahan, WSSB's Assistive Technology Specialist, for a 4-day training in BrailleNote, Duxbury, JAWS, and Magic.

Attend all four days or choose to attend only 2 (either August 6 & 7 or August 8 & 9):

August 6: *BrailleNote*

August 7: *BrailleNote & Duxbury*

August 8: *JAWS*

August 9: *JAWS and Magic*

All students will receive: *Computer Skills for Teachers of The Visually Impaired*, textbook by Bruce McClanahan, Assistive Technology Specialist.

Lodging is available at WSSB (\$25.00 per night). Register now, because space is limited! You can register by visiting www.wssb.wa.gov. The link for the registration form is hosted on the front page of our website. **For more information, contact Sherry Hahn, Digital Learning Coordinator at (360) 696-6321, ext. 133.**



Education

By Craig Meador, Director On-Campus Programs



We have one half of the school year under our belt and we are pressing forward into the new semester. This is a great time to reflect on our first semester successes and to bring everyone up to speed on happenings around WSSB.

Goalball Finishes Strong: The goalball team worked hard this year and made some great gains. This was a rebuilding year as the team lost many of their senior players. Coach Paul Baldwin and Lisa Hodge piloted the team to very respectful showings in the national tournament in Florida and the Oregon School for the Blind Open. The girls team took first place in the Blue division at the Oregon Tournament and won the coveted Sportsmanship Award in Florida.

Ryan Dawson Wins a Jazz Festival Award: Junior Ryan Dawson participated in the Jazz Choir at Hudsons Bay High School. The choir competed in this year's Clark College Jazz Festival. This two-day event draws dozens of choirs and bands from Oregon and Washington each year. Ryan was recognized as the Clark College Jazz Festival, Outstanding Male Soloist for 2007. Way to go!

Former Student Lands Job: Lisa Heberling, graduate 2006, recently was hired in her hometown Safeway Store. Lisa splits her time between the Floral department and Starbucks. She credits the multiple job training opportunities that she had in the Occupational Studies Program at WSSB. This provided her with a wide platform of skills making her very employable. Lisa was the winner of the 2006 Roy J. Brothers Award (WSSB award given annually to a student at the school who has shown outstanding progress in some area of their life).

Starbucks Partners with Lion's Den Coffee Shop: The Lion's Den Coffee shop was a grateful recipient of a commercial grade espresso machine courtesy of Starbucks. The team is quickly learning all the features of the new machine. This machine will allow students to fill multiple orders at the same time. Even more exciting is the possibility of partnering with Starbucks on future endeavors to include training programs for students. It is our hope that this will lead to additional opportunities for future student employment.

WSSB Downhill Ski Program

By Adrienne Stout, Recreation Coordinator

The 2007 ski/snowboard season was short, but fun. WSSB students and volunteers were able to make it to the mountain three times this season. With the help of the Mt. Hood Meadows Ski School and our wonderful volunteers, the students were able to learn to ski and snowboard. A special thanks to Mt. Hood Meadows staff and A.B. McClaran as well as our dedicated volunteers: Rich Barrows, Lynn Reichling, Clay Sharp, Sandor Bozso, Jennifer Laford, Andrew Owen, Scott Rencher, Corey Summers and Teresa Dunn. Our Ski program could not take place without the help of these wonderful folks.



Left to right: Robby Cole (student), Becca Parker & Scott Mitchell (volunteers) with Javier Adame (student)



Nathaniel Baker (student) receives guidance from Scott Rencher (volunteer)



Tiffany Wilson (student) with Andrew Owen (volunteer)

OUTREACH SERVICES

By Dee Amundsen, Director of Outreach



WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND—SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATORS

The purpose of this Institute is to provide public school personnel who are, or will be, working with a visually impaired or blind (VI/Blind) child in their local school, with foundational knowledge, skills and experiences that will allow the participant to understand the impact of vision loss on learning. At the end of this unique, fun, and fascinating Institute, participants realize that, under the direction of a Teacher of the Visually Impaired, they have the ability and confidence to provide appropriate instruction, assessment, strategies and interventions that will allow the VI/Blind student to thrive, blossom, achieve and succeed.

When: July 22–July 27, 2007

Where: WSSB

Contact Info.: Dee Amundsen, Director of Outreach at 360-696-6321 x124 or email dee.amundsen@wssb.wa.gov.

Cost: \$375. Fee also includes lodging, a great daily breakfast, snacks, a barbeque and pie social.

Lodging: Lodging is included in the registration fee. Participants stay in the modern, air-conditioned cottages on campus that WSSB students reside in during the school year. Each cottage has a full kitchen, private bedrooms, community bathroom and living room. Men and women will have separate residences.

Who should attend: Any person who works with visually impaired or blind children in public school and has had limited experience or education in the field of blindness. Typically participants include: Teachers (classroom and special education), Paraprofessionals, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and Speech and Language Specialists, Administrators, School Psychologists and other related service personnel.

Institute Format: This institute is limited to about 45 participants. We have seven core staff and several guest presenters. All instructors are highly experienced and educated in the field of visual impairment and blindness. We start each day as a large group with breakfast and some group instruction. Instruction includes some lecture but we believe that learning is best supported for participants by having as many hands-on, experiential learning opportunities as possible. Throughout the week we will also break into strands so that your learning can be personalized to meet the needs of your particular student(s). The strands include Birth–5, Elementary, Middle and High School, Multiple Disabilities and Psychologists. Approximately 25% of your time will be spent in individualized strands.

Credits/clock hours: This Institute is available for 3 credits or 33 clock hours from Seattle Pacific University. Cost for clock hours (\$45) and credits (\$129) are additional.

These are some of the topics that will be addressed: Travel Skills – Orientation and Mobility, The Eye & Vision Disorders, Vision Loss & Learning, Adapting Environments & Materials, Assistive Technology, Physical Education, Social Skills & Vision Loss, Daily Living and Self-help Skills, Your Role in the Classroom, Assessment, Braille and other Literacy Media, and Low Vision Aids.

Special Notes: On July 25, classes are over at noon to allow participants an afternoon and evening to explore this beautiful area of Washington on their own. Shopping and dining in Portland, a trip to the Oregon coast or a trip to the Mt. St. Helens Visitor's Center have all been popular activities. Experience a night out for dinner at a local restaurant while under the sleep shade! Meet and listen to a panel of VI/blind students talk about their experiences in both public and residential schools. **REGISTER EARLY! ONCE WE RECEIVE YOUR REGISTRATION, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WILL BE MAILED TO YOU! (registration available at www.wssb.wa.gov)**

Recent and Upcoming Student Activities

By Renee Corso, Associate Principal for After School and Evening Programs



Reading Challenge: WSSB continues to look for ways of making literacy fun and rewarding for students. Building on the experience of our first NW Regional Braille Challenge and mirror Print Reading Challenge last year, we expanded the half-day event this year to include a Spelling Bee and Readers Theatre. We teamed up with the Department of Services for the Blind to offer two Braille Challenge contests, one in Seattle, the other at WSSB. Designed for students of all ages and based on reading and grade-levels, students tested their skills in spelling, reading comprehension, speed & accuracy, proofreading, and charts & graphs interpretation. On March 2, after a kick-off assembly lead by Superintendent, Dean Stenehem, WSSB and visiting Oregon and Idaho Braille readers spent the morning competing in these areas along with their non-Braille reading classmates who were given similar materials in print. Mid-morning brought a “brain-food” break, and after the competition, everyone was awarded a commemorative event button for their efforts. Students will be further recognized at an upcoming school assembly.

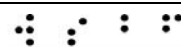
Northwest Environmental Camp: WSSB’s annual week-long outdoor environmental camp is scheduled to take place at Camp Magruder from April 30-May 3. This year’s theme will be “metamorphosis.” Camp Magruder rests between a freshwater lake and the beautiful Northern Oregon coastline in Rockway, OR. Through learning activities designed to take place during hiking, fishing, and beach combing outings, students will explore nature, ecosystems, life cycles, and metamorphosis. They will further solidify and demonstrate their learning by creating collages, ecosystem skits and songs, and giving oral presentations. Recreational activities such as swimming, burro riding, boating, campfire gatherings, and team competitions, will provide students the opportunity to practice outdoor orientation and mobility, organizational skills, personal strength building, and teamwork. And if previous experiences hold true, the kids will likely come home ranking the food among their favorite memories of the week!

Summer School will be held from July 9-13, 2007. Several themes are being explored. “School of Rock”, would focus on music theory and performance, and would be tailored for students in grades 6-12. “Extreme Adventures” would center on experiential “safe” activities, primarily outside the classroom, and would be geared for students in grades 3-8. Plans will be finalized by mid-March.

Sports Camp will be held from July 15-19, and will offer a wide array of sports activities designed for both junior and senior campers.

YES 1 (Youth Employment Solutions) will take place from July 9-20, and will give young teens experience in career exploration, resume writing, mock interviewing, and community service. Students will also practice Independent Living Skills and participate in a variety of evening recreational activities.

Washington School for the Blind Foundation



WSBF

Washington School for the Blind
Foundation

Helping Washington's Blind Youth Achieve Success

The Washington School for the Blind Foundation is pleased to announce that the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington and the Anderson Family Charitable Fund granted the WSBF \$19,800 (\$4,800 from the Community Foundation for Southwest Washington and \$15,000 from the Anderson Family Charitable Fund) to be expended on future productions of “Video Clips on Blindness Tips”. The grant was submitted by the Foundation, with assistance from Sherry Hahn, WSSB’s Digital Learning Coordinator.

Current “clips” can be found on the WSSB website at www.wssb.wa.gov under “Video Clips for Blindness Tips”. These clips are designed to provide tips for blind students, adults, educators, parents, and the community regarding the unique aspect of working with or assisting blind and visually impaired students and adults.

Assistive Technology

Kurzweil 3000

By Carol Schultz, Teacher of the Visually Impaired

Earlier this school year, the Washington State School for the Blind became a national Kurzweil training center. This is an exciting addition to already being an IntelliTools training center. These two opportunities allow WSSB to be on the cutting edge of several wonderful opportunities for the community.

The first Kurzweil training took place on Friday, February 16, 2007. The presenter was Suzanne Feit. The focus of the class was on the Kurzweil 3000, a scanning, reading, writing, and learning tool for individuals with learning difficulties. This is a multi-sensory approach that uses the auditory sense by hearing the material, the visual sense by seeing the highlighted text, and the kinesthetic sense by manipulating the material. Kurzweil 3000 provides: access to any curriculum through its scanning capabilities and ability to access information on the Web; increased reading fluency through tools built into the program; helpful study skills with visual and auditory feedback along with active reading tools that include highlighting, text circle tools, annotations, bookmarks, and voice notes; decoding support; writing and self-editing tools; and independent test taking tools which include the ability for the student to complete worksheets, answer fill-in-the-blanks, multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions.

Attending the training were individuals from the surrounding Vancouver-Portland metro area. Several individuals were from local community colleges' disability offices. Others came as far away as Tacoma to attend. A total of 23 participants were in attendance.

The next Kurzweil 3000 training will be held later this year.

Digital/Distance Learning Update

By Sherry Hahn, Digital Learning Coordinator

Lights, Camera, Action

In Washington State School for the Blind's quest to provide educational opportunities we have expanded our web served – Video Clips on Blindness Tips. The newest tip that will help parents, those working with the blind, and individuals that are blind or visually impaired is called "Sighted Guide Techniques". This 3-minute clip quickly and succinctly demonstrates how a sighted guide can be used to help move through space safely and efficiently. Tip #1: When you are going to offer sighted assistance you would just ask the person, "Would you like some sighted help today?" Check out <http://www.wssb.wa.gov> to see what else you can do.

Video Conferencing Pays Off For Teachers

The school has offered a class called "Literary Braille Refresher". In the State of Washington, staff members who work with students in Braille must first pass what is called The BLUE test, which says they are proficient in using and teaching Braille. In order to keep this certification current they must take 10 hours of Literary Braille classes every five years. To help out with this endeavor JoAnn Gatley offered to teach a 10 hour class via video conference. We were amazed at the response. She is currently teaching 23 students in 12 different locations across the State of Washington. We are now offering a second section in March as more people need this valuable class.

Update from the Superintendent's Office

By Dean O. Stenehjem, Ed.D., Superintendent

We are currently into the middle of the legislative session that will determine the 2007-2009 budgets for all of state government. Below is a brief overview on the status of WSSB's budget submission and the decision packages that are included in the process.

Operating Budget: The school's budget proposal came out looking very good in Governor Gregoire's budget and we anticipate that both the House and Senate's budgets will be very close to the Governor's. If this occurs, things will look good for blind/visually impaired children being served by WSSB. Some of the additional requests that were funded in the Governor's budget: 1) Day Student Transportation - additional funding to assist with budget shortfalls in this important area. 2) Safety Training - minimal additional funding to safety training dollars for staff to covered required safety training. 3) Learning Independence for Today and Tomorrow Program (LIFTT) - WSSB, in partnership with the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) and at the request of local districts, piloted a 5th year program beginning approximately three years ago to determine if this special transition program is a viable service that needs to continue. After examining the positive outcome result, a request for permanent funding was requested. The total funding requested was not provided and we were asked to help fund the remaining components through expanded partnerships with DSB since these students are Vocational Rehabilitation clients. However, the funds that we were provided will help move this program forward. 4) Regional Program Pilot - funding was also provided for WSSB in partnership with Educational Service Districts 105 and 123, to develop a pilot regional service delivery program that will assist in stabilizing services in the greater Yakima and Tri-Cities areas. 5) Braille Transcribers/Prison Program - WSSB was provided additional funding to help expand this very successful program. In addition to this, WSSB continues to expand services on campus and through Digital Learning options. Please check out the "Video Clips on Blindness Tips" on our website: www.wssb.wa.gov. Recently, WSSB received grants for approximately \$20,000 to develop more of the video clips, which are short lessons on specialized training skills for blind and visually impaired students. Since they are on our web, they can be accessed by anyone throughout the world.

Capital Budget: We anticipate that two major capital requests will move forward this session. 1) Replacement of the Kennedy (P.E. Building), which has major seismic issues. The new building has been designed and if funding is provided, WSSB would be able to begin construction the summer/fall of 2007, with completion of the building the fall/winter of 2008. This will be a great building that will allow us to expand programs for students and the facility should provide years of very efficient service to the citizens of our state.

Legislative: Two bills worth tracking are:

- ◇ HB 1548 - this is a bill that would establish a commission to review all residential programs under Chapter 72 in the state's administrative code every ten years to determine whether the program should remain as is, consolidate services, and/or whether a facility should be closed. WSSB's Board of Trustees has requested that WSSB be removed from this bill since all residential programs other than WSSB and the School for the Deaf is either custodial care or correctional facilities (under this bill).
- ◇ HB 2246 - this bill doesn't impact WSSB but makes changes in the way that the School for the Deaf operates. I believe that the current state law provides the School for the Deaf the opportunity to do everything that is spelled out in HB 2246, but this bill is somewhat prescriptive. Currently, I believe WSSB is doing or will be doing everything that is mentioned in HB 2246.

I believe the school has good legislative support, support from the Governor's office, and also from local public schools, parents and consumers. The support each group provides to WSSB is greatly appreciated.

As I have mentioned in the past, WSSB always has an open door and takes pride in providing information about services provided by the school. We also take great pride in gathering input from all stakeholders about additional services that are needed in our state and how to continue to improve upon the services we do provide. Remember, Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much!" Thank you for your continued support.

WSSB Construction Update

By Rob Tracey, Plant Manager

The sound of hammers once again can be heard around campus as renovation work begins on the Walter Dry building, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) office expansion and Safari Club International cooperative display area. Reworking of the building also known as Arts and Crafts, includes a major remodel that involves roofing replacement, total wall reconfiguration as well as heating, cooling and plumbing upgrades. When finished this June, it will house the campus woodshop and the art department classroom and storage.

DSB has been located on the second floor of the administration building at WSSB for many years. They are currently going through their second expansion in five years. This project will add two offices and involves remodeling their computer lab, hall and new office construction. Scheduled completion for this phase of the work is mid April.

Safari Club International has been interacting with the staff and students of WSSB for several years and have been instrumental in setting up displays during the annual track meet. These displays have allowed all participants to view and touch animals from around the world that most people only read or hear about. Construction has now begun on establishing a semi-permanent display in the basement of Old Main. Plans involve setting up taxidermy animals so that staff and students from not only WSSB but the surrounding districts can walk around, view and touch lions, bears, water buffalo and other exotic examples of wildlife. Exhibits will be traded out regularly to keep the displays constantly changing and informative. Completion for this portion of the project is also scheduled for June.

School of Piano Technology for the Blind

By Len Leger, Executive Director

Have Tuning Hammer, Will Travel

The staff of the School of Piano Technology will travel to any location to present career information to potential students. This outreach, funded by a grant from the Gibney Family Foundation, hopes to increase awareness of the excellent income potential in the field of piano technology. Since its inception in 1949, our school has served as a small business incubator for over 200 small piano service businesses owned and operated by blind and visually impaired people. The two-day workshop will provide both lab and lecture learning opportunities to enable potential students to evaluate their aptitude and ability for success in this dynamic field. For more information, please call (360) 693-1511 or info@pianotuningschool.org



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Piano Hospital Receives Community Foundation Grant!

The Community Foundation of Southwest Washington has awarded an \$11,200 grant to fund the purchase of two Braille Note Computers for use in the school's business management curriculum. The Braille Note is an enabling technology that allows blind people to be more competitive with sighted technicians. Braille Note computers offer portability, global accessibility and connectivity never before available to blind individuals. Students in the business management classes learn to schedule and confirm appointments, keep track of income and expenses, prepare and print invoices, etc. Braille Note technology will improve their ability to function independently. Its capabilities include calendar, calculator, word processor, database and spreadsheet software plus portable printer capability, internet and global positioning technology. The two computers purchased with this grant will be used as teaching tools. Upon graduation, students will be responsible for purchasing their own technology. They will know how to use the technology to overcome their challenge by operating an independent piano service business.

REMEMBERING WHEN

By James Eccles, President, Former Students Association

Back before the major residential cottage remodeling project in the early-nineties, WSSB alumni conventions were perennially held every two years: When the springtime news was about electing either a national President or my local Congressional Representative, then it must also be about time for yet another fun-filled, memory-packed alumni convention. Nowadays, with conventions held more infrequently at five-year intervals--and with those resulting convention-year dates falling one year prior to year numbers evenly divisible by five, an algebra formula, not a calendar, is almost more helpful in figuring out when will the next convention be.

I said, though, in an earlier column in these pages shortly after our last 2004 convention that I would mention commemorative anniversary news events that, when heard on radio, TV or Internet, would jog the memory to line up and sign up for the next convention; and, o, don't forget to connect up with your classmates from your area to get them to come join the fun, too.

Our first reminder article in this series, you will recall, mentioned the 100th anniversary of the birth of Honest Abe, our nation's 16th President. Now here is another reminder-event article:

<http://content.lib.washington.edu/aypweb/context.html>

When you hear commemorative news stories about the twice-delayed Alaska-Pacific-Yukon Exposition then you can say to yourself and tell others you know who might be interested, it is time for another FSA convention at WSSB. Originally, the exposition was slated to be the 1907 ten-year-anniversary celebration of the Klondike gold rush, which had, as it jumping off point, Seattle. However, the commemorative spotlight that year went to Jamestown--on the right coast, which held its own 300-year-anniversary celebration.

Personally, I am grateful to the AYP organizers for their two-year delay, because now it gives us one more parallel come-and-join-us event to help jog even more people's memory to come and remember when.

O, and if you would like to come and be a volunteer to assist at meal events or other alumni convention activities in June of 2009, just call the school when you hear those Remember the Exposition news stories to talk about it.

I look forward to meeting and greeting everyone at our small, usually 30-70, band of gathered alumns in June, 2009.

After School Recreation at WSSB

By Adrienne Stout, Recreation Coordinator

After school recreation is never dull around the campus. We have had a wonderful time bowling at Big Al's, Bingo has been a blast with many happy winners and the students, both male and female, took advantage of the manicures offered by Residential Life Counselor's, Shelley and Sandy before the Winter Formal.



Students Jackson Boutwell and Nick Wilks with staff member Shelley McCloud



Students Stephanie Bair and Javier Adame enjoy a game of Bingo



Students Jessica Hodges and Briana Clark getting a manicure

PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Jean Marie Curtis, Parent Representative

Calling All Parents and Families

Let me introduce myself. I am Jean Marie Curtis and I have a grandson that is attending WSSB. He will be graduating in March and will attend Heritage High School.

I wanted to give something back to WSSB, so I applied for the position of Parent Representative to the Board of Trustees. It is with great pride that I take that position. My job will be to help the parents and families of blind/visually impaired children throughout Washington State.

I would like to start by letting you know about a tool that is available to all of you. It is call the "parent listserv." This tool allows parents/families to talk to each other. It is sort of like a message board. A parent can send an email asking a question about a problem and someone that reads it and has an answer can reply to the first person individually or to the whole listserv.

Recently a parent had a question regarding her daughter and a parent with the same problem replied. It was very pleasing to see parents or family members talk, discuss and get answers.

If you would like to join this listserv just follow these instructions:

- ◇ Go to the WSSB website (www.wssb.wa.gov).
- ◇ Look on the right hand side of the site for a list of services, etc. Under "School Information" in bold letters is a link titled "Parents/Families." Click on that link.
- ◇ You will see four additional links. Click on "Parent Listserv."
- ◇ You will see a document that describes the listserv and the rules that apply to it. The third paragraph tells you how to subscribe. From your own email, open a new message and send it to parentsforum@wssb.wa.gov with "Subscribe" in the subject line.
- ◇ You will receive a confirmation email from the listserv. It will give you a confirmation code to send back to the listserv. You will need to reply to this message within 10 days or you will not be subscribed.

I hope all of you will join the listserv. We can all use a tool to communicate with others like ourselves.

If you have any problems subscribing to the listserv or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at curtis_jean@hotmail.com or 360-601-5562.

Good luck and I hope to hear from all of you on the listserv.

Washington State School for the Blind - 2006-2007 School Year Events

March	Career Fair	March 1-2
	Braille Challenge	March 2
	State In-Service Day (AER Conference)	March 9
	Board of Trustees Meeting	March 16-17
	WSSB/WSD Lions Carnival	March 22
April	Spring Break	April 2-6
	End of 3 rd Quarter	April 13
	Camp Magruder	April 30-May 3
May	Board of Trustees Conference Call	May 3
	Lions Track Meet	May 17
	Music Dept.-Program/Volunteer Recognition	May 24
	Memorial Day	May 28
June	Annual Picnic/Awards/Open House	June 14
	Board of Trustees Meetings	June 15
	Commencement	June 15
	End of 4 th Quarter/2 nd Semester	June 20
	Final Day of School (no transportation)	June 20
July	YES Program	July 8-19
	Summer School (Grades 3-8)	July 8-13
	Sports Camp	July 15-19
	WSSB Summer Institute	July 22-27
	Yakima Combined Summer Institute	July 16-20

The Lions Roar Newsletter is produced three times per year at the Washington State School for the Blind, 2214 East 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98661-4120. Phone 360-696-6321 Fax 360-737-2120
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Vancouver, WA 98661-4120

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